

PRESS RELEASE

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union,
the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey
and the EFTA countries belonging to the European Economic Area
upon the nomination of the new Prime Minister of Belarus**

The European Union notes the nomination of Mr Gennady Novitsky to serve as Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus and wishes to take this opportunity to reiterate its expectations of the country.

The European Union would encourage the new government to make a lasting and increasingly significant commitment to the path of democracy and respect for human rights, as requirements for normalisation of relations with the EU.

The European Union would like to see Belarus in time regain its place within the international community and participate in regional stability. It does not wish Belarus to be isolated and is prepared to continue supporting its transition to democracy and a market economy, in cooperation with all the political forces in Belarus which are willing to work to that end.

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The European Union looks to the new government to restore a constructive dialogue with civil society in close cooperation with the Advisory and Monitoring Group of the OSCE and to promote the existence of free, independent media.

The European Union reaffirms its expectations as regards respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It would point more particularly to its desire to see the various disappearances cleared up. In addition, without wishing to interfere in internal judicial proceedings, the European Union calls for a review of the heavy prison sentence imposed on Professor Bandazhevsky, which the Union considers disproportionate to the charges against him.
